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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to review the existing literature on the use of interpreters, and to make recommendations that will promote effective communication among family members, professionals, and untrained interpreters during IEP/IFSP meetings and family conferences. Effective communication between professionals and families is crucial in understanding the beliefs, thoughts, and feelings of the family, and in building mutual trust and respect. When families are non-English speaking, or have significantly limited English proficiency, one method of improving communication is the use of interpreters. No institutions currently provide formal training programs for persons who want to be qualified as interpreters in the education field. As a result, teacher aides, secretaries, and school custodians have been drafted as interpreters, simply because they speak the language used by the family. Professionals need to know effective strategies for working with persons who are untrained as interpreters and have little knowledge about terms and concepts of special education. Five themes are examined in this report: (1) the complexity of the interpretation process; (2) enhancing accurate interpretation; (3) interpreter styles; (4) the psychosocial aspects of the interpretation process; and (5) determining when interpreters are not needed. Includes extensive references, an annotated bibliography, and a list of available resources from the CLAS Web site. (Author/SG)

Working with Interpreters to Plan Early Childhood Services with Limited- English-Proficient Families

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Susan A. Fowler
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Services with Limited-English-Proficient Families***

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June 2001

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**Technical
Report #12**

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Services with Limited-
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Effective communication between professionals and families is crucial in understanding the beliefs, thoughts, and feelings of the family, and in building mutual trust and respect. When families are non-English-speaking, or have significantly limited English proficiency, one method of improving communication is the use of interpreters. There are no institutions providing formal training programs for persons who want to be qualified as interpreters in the education field. As a result, teacher aides, secretaries, and school custodians have been drafted as interpreters, simply because they speak the language used by the family. Professionals need to know effective strategies for working with persons who are untrained as interpreters and have little knowledge about terms and concepts of special education. The purpose of this report is to review the existing literature on the use of interpreters, and to make recommendations that will promote effective communication among family members, professionals, and untrained interpreters during IEP/IFSP meetings and family conferences. Five themes are discussed: (a) the complexity of the interpretation process; (b) enhancing accurate interpretation; (c) interpreter styles; (d) the psychosocial aspects of the interpretation process; and (e) determining when interpreters are not needed.



Introduction

Effective communication between professionals and families is crucial in understanding the beliefs, values, thoughts, and feelings of the family, and in building mutual trust and respect between families and providers. Several practices, such as jargon-free communication, non-judgmental listening, and providing sufficient time for families and professionals to discuss issues, have been recommended to promote effective communication (Hyun & Fowler, 1995; Turbiville, Turnbull, Garland, & Lee, 1996). However, the extent to which these recommended practices are applicable or should be modified when the families are non-English-speaking, or have significantly limited English proficiency, has not been scrutinized sufficiently.

One way to mitigate the communication barrier existing between professionals and non-English-speaking or limited-English-proficient families is to utilize the service of bilingual staff (Lynch & Stein, 1987; Sosa, 1996). However, bilingual staff are in short supply in many locales, because few students from traditionally underrepresented groups choose education as a career (Plata, 1993), and bilingual teacher education is not emphasized in this country. This situation has lead many professionals to rely on "third persons" (i.e., interpreters). Interpreters are defined as persons who use an oral modality to translate English to the families' language or vice-versa, whereas translators are defined as

persons who use a written modality (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). Interestingly, there are no institutions providing formal training programs for persons who want to be qualified as interpreters in the education field (Langdon, 1994). As a result, teacher aides, secretaries, and school custodians have been drafted as interpreters and translators, simply because they speak the language used by the family (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). These interpreters often practice without any in-service training on how to serve as an interpreter, and with minimal or no remuneration for their services (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994).

A scarcity in education of bilingual staff and formally trained interpreters may continue into the future (Plata, 1993). If successful communication with families

who are non-English-speaking or who have limited English proficiency is to be actualized (Fradd, 1990), professionals need to know effective strategies for working with persons who are untrained as interpreters and have little knowledge about terms and concepts of special education.

The purpose of this report is to review the existing literature on the use of interpreters with non-English-speaking



Interpreters are defined as persons who use an oral modality to translate English to the families' language or vice-versa, whereas translators are defined as persons who use a written modality.



THE COMPLEXITY OF THE INTERPRETATION PROCESS

or limited-English-proficient families, and to make recommendations that will promote effective communication among family members, professionals, and interpreters who speak the family's language, but have not been trained formally as interpreters or special educators. Although interpreters are used not only in meetings but also during student assessments and teaching, the focus of this report will be on

group meetings, such as the IEP, IFSP, or family conferences, where team members collect information from and convey it to families. The following five themes are discussed: (a) the complexity of the interpretation process, (b) enhancing accurate interpretation, (c) interpreter styles, (d) the psychosocial aspects of the interpretation process, and (e) determining when interpreters are not needed.

The Complexity of the Interpretation Process

Acknowledging the complexity of the interpretation process is the first step for professionals. They must consider their roles and responsibilities when working with interpreters to enhance communication with families. Interpretation is extremely demanding. It is a process in which interpreters convey information, thoughts, and feelings attached to sentences, actions,

and gestures by the speaker, considering contexts in which both the particular sentence is conveyed and the cultures in

which the speaker and the listener live (Egli, 1987; Fradd, 1990; Uhlenbeck,

1978 cited in Plata, 1993). Interpretation is not a simple process that just "substitutes a word/phrase/clause/sentence in the listener's language for the speaker's word/phrase/clause/sentence" (Plata, 1993, p. 20). Understanding pragmatics (practical meaning in social context) and the nuances (subtle variations of meaning) of sentences in English and the families' language is extremely important for successful interpretation (Plata, 1993).

For example, if an interpreter translated the following Japanese sentence, "I don't agree to the idea, a little bit," to English by considering substitution alone, the sentence could be interpreted as "She (or he) almost agrees to the idea." This sentence would not be translated as such if the interpreter



Acknowledging the complexity of the interpretation process is the first step for professionals.



THE COMPLEXITY OF THE INTERPRETATION PROCESS

considered Japanese culture, in which speakers often use "a little bit" to cushion their disagreement. If the interpreter considered technical (i.e., substitution) and cultural aspects of the translation, the sentence might be interpreted two ways: "She has not agreed to the idea, but she might agree to it if some conditions are changed" or "She disagrees with the idea."

Ultimately, consideration of intonation, nonverbal behaviors, context, and the speaker's personal style, in addition to word substitution and culture, will yield one meaning of the sentence.

In addition to understanding pragmatics and nuance of sentences used in daily life, interpreters need to know pragmatics of words and phrases used in specific fields. Most terms used in special education (e.g., least restrictive environment, IFSP, transdisciplinary) may not be understood and interpreted if the interpreter does not have sufficient background knowledge about these concepts, such as history, principles, and practices (Plata, 1993).

For example, the interpretation of the term "least restrictive environment" has been controversial since the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was enacted. Tension exists between giving children with disabilities "appropriate education" and giving children with disabilities as many opportunities as possible to "study and interact with students without disabilities." This tension is understood through the court cases, philosophy of integration and inclusion, and practices

conducted in educational settings. The interpreter may not translate fully the concept "least restrictive environment" without this background knowledge.

Furthermore, interpreters need to translate the pragmatic understanding into the

family's language by considering their cultural background. For example, some countries have regular class and special school but not

resource room, self-contained classroom, or home school. If they do not have a term which directly corresponds to the term "least restrictive environment," the interpreter may use the terms that exist in the home country's education system (i.e., "regular class" and "special school") to explain the concept of the least restrictive environment.

From a pragmatic point of view, interpreters may need to elaborate on information provided by the speaker to make it understandable to the listener (Egli, 1987). For example, if parents from Japan said, "I feel like using cats' hands" the interpreter needs to explain the practical meaning of "I feel like using cat's hands."

However, as noted by Fradd (1990) and Langdon (1994), interpreters should take care not to inject their own beliefs, values, thoughts, and feelings into the interpretation process. Nor should they



In addition to understanding pragmatics and nuance of sentences used in daily life, interpreters need to know pragmatics of words and phrases used in specific fields.



ENHANCING ACCURATE INTERPRETATION

distort or change information. "The parents are extremely busy, feeling like asking somebody to help them get everything done" may be a correct elaboration of "I feel like using cats' hands." On the other hand, "The parents are extremely busy, so it is difficult to

implement such a program at home" is an example of distorted and value-injected translation for the same sentence. Self-discipline and self-reflection are needed in order to be neutral in the work of interpreting.

Enhancing Accurate Interpretation

Content of information conveyed and the way in which the information is spoken may influence the interpretation process (Johnson & Sussman, 1992). If the topic discussed is familiar to the interpreter, that could facilitate the interpretation process. If the speaker conveys the information in a clear manner (e.g., using simple sentences, speaking slowly and clearly), this could enhance the probability of accurate interpretation of the information.

With regard to terms used by professionals, Harrison, Bhatt, Carey and Ebdon (1988) analyzed 30-minute medical interviews in which a doctor communicated with four patients who spoke in Gujarati, using four non-professional interpreters (i.e., family members). Harrison, et al. (1988) assessed the extent to which information was misinterpreted and what factors affected the misinterpretation. They reported more than 80 examples of terms that were misinterpreted or not interpreted. They also observed several patterns of misin-

terpretation in the four interviews. For example, interpreters often misinterpreted medical terminology (e.g., anatomical terms, symptoms, conditions). Harrison, et al. (1988) accounted for misinterpretation of anatomical terms in that Gujarati does not employ the same classification system for the human body as English. In addition to medical terminology, two kinds of expressions were often misinterpreted or non-interpreted: euphemisms (i.e., the terms used in place of more accurate or direct ones, e.g., "pass away" instead of "die") and loan words (i.e., terms used in both languages but with different meanings, e.g., "cool" means expressionless in Japan, whereas "cool" means fine in the U.S.).

Harrison, et al. (1988) suggest that professionals should consider characteristics of words (e.g., terminology, loan words, euphemisms) in order to reduce misinterpretation and non-interpretation by interpreters. Avoiding the use of specialized terminology (Langdon,



INTERPRETER STYLES

1994; Leung, 1996) may reduce frequency of misinterpretation. For example, instead of the term "semantics," professionals may say, "the meaning of the word," which is more understandable for the interpreter who is not familiar with the field of speech pathology.

The results reported by Harrison, et al. (1988) reported that some questions were misinterpreted or not interpreted. A simple question was defined as a one-clause question (e.g., "How do you feel about this?"). Complex questions included one clause in another clause (e.g., "Do you understand how she did at the time?"). In serial questions, patients were asked alternative questions or questions in a series (e.g., "Do you know, I mean, do you understand what she said by crying at bed time? 'Come, Mom!' or 'I feel alone,' or what else? Can you describe that?"). Results indicate that the highest rates of misinterpretation or non-interpretation were observed in complex questions, followed by serial questions and simple questions. Not surprisingly, this information suggests that simple sentences

are easier to translate accurately than complex ones.

Personal styles (e.g., speed of speaking or articulation) and dialects used by professionals

and families may also impact the interpretation process (Johnson & Sussman, 1992). Professionals not only need to use standard English and speak slowly and clearly, but also need to allow interpreters to become familiar with the dialect used by the family. Using the same interpreter with one family throughout a case may reduce misinterpretation, because both parties may become more familiar and comfortable with each other's communication styles over time. Professionals may also need to contact community leaders who speak the same dialect as the family or access other resources (e.g., books) showing characteristics of the dialect in order to provide adequate support to the interpretation process.



Professionals not only need to use standard English and speak slowly and clearly, but also need to allow interpreters to become familiar with the dialect used by the family.

Interpreter Styles

In meetings, mainly two types of interpretation are used: consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). In

consecutive interpretation, following a short pause, the interpreter translates a segment of the message (usually two or three sentences). In simultaneous



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interpretation, as soon as the speaker starts conveying a message, the interpreter begins to translate the message.

Although the consecutive interpretation is more time-consuming than simultaneous interpretation, simultaneous interpretation requires interpreters to have greater memory skills and quicker responses than consecutive interpreta-

tion. In the educational field where few trained interpreters are available, consecutive interpretation often is recommended to reduce pressure on interpreters and to minimize misinterpretation (Egli, 1987). The consecutive interpretation method may require approximately twice as much time as meetings without interpretation services (Langdon, 1994).

Psychosocial Aspects of the Interpretation Process

The interpretation process involves three types of relationships: professionals and interpreters, interpreters and families, and professionals and families. Relationship dynamics may substantially influence the interpretation process.

The following four themes are discussed:

- (a) Being sensitive to the reaction of interpreters,
- (b) Divulging private information,
- (c) Maintaining neutrality, and
- (d) Forming a partnership with an interpreter.

Being Sensitive to the Reaction of Interpreters

Professionals should be aware of cues indicating a difficult interpretation or

misinterpretation (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). For example, if the interpreter makes a face or does not initiate the interpretation process immediately after information was conveyed, their actions may suggest difficulty in interpreting the information. If the interpreter uses many words and sentences relative to the length of the original information, the interpreter may be indicating that the terms do not easily fit the language used by the family. If the response by the parent is different from what is expected, professionals should determine if a misinterpretation has occurred.

Divulging Private Information

Families may be reluctant to disclose very intimate and personal information in the meeting when the meeting is



PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF THE INTERPRETATION PROCESS

mediated by interpreters (Egli, 1987; Hyun & Fowler, 1995). The extent to which families disclose personal information may be accounted for partly by characteristics of the interpreter such as familiarity with the family, ethnicity, gender, social status, age, and marital status (Egli, 1987). Professionals should discuss with families their preferences for possible interpreters and when feasible, provide a choice of interpreters to whom they are likely to disclose personal information (Hyun & Fowler, 1995). In addition, professionals should discuss the importance of confidentiality with interpreters and families (Egli, 1987; Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). In some cases, this may reduce the families' anxiety about discussing personal issues through a third party.

Maintaining Neutrality

Interpreters need to be neutral. Regardless of their personal perspective on information presented by professionals and families, interpreters are expected to convey the information without addition, omission, editorialization, or distortion (Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994; Media, 1982). Such neutrality may be difficult to maintain when friends or relatives are used as interpreters (Langdon, 1994). Professionals, however, should be aware of the possible impact of their own behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions on the interpreters' neutrality even when interpreters are not related to the family. For example, Blakely (1984) reported Hmong, Khmer, Lao, and Vietnamese views toward untrained interpreters in school settings.

She reported most parents felt that interpreters usually wanted to satisfy the teacher rather than facilitate communication between parents and teachers. In fact, the Vietnamese parents revealed that their interpreters had threatened them if they refused to accept a teacher's recommendation. Although Blakely (1984) did not report teachers' behaviors, attitudes, or perceptions of interpreters and parents, the parents' views reported indicate clearly that interpreters' neutrality should not be assumed. If professionals complain to interpreters about the parents' responses, the interpreter may in turn try to persuade the family to accept a proposal.

On the other hand, if the interpreter and the family have the same disastrous experiences (e.g., both of them are refugees and some family members were killed by occupying military), the interpreter may take the side of the family rather than the professionals (Lynch & Hanson, 1992). Professionals should discuss with interpreters the importance of neutrality and encourage them to be reflective



Professionals should discuss with families their preferences for possible interpreters and when feasible, provide a choice of interpreters to whom they are likely to disclose personal information.



Professionals should discuss with interpreters the importance of neutrality and encourage them to be reflective about their neutrality, on an ongoing basis.



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about their neutrality, on an ongoing basis. For example, professionals may give the interpreters tips for being self-reflective such as asking themselves, "Am I conveying my personal feelings?" and "How will I deal with issues that are emotional or sensitive or contrary to what I believe?" (Media, 1982, p.7).

Forming a Partnership

The social status of interpreters often tends to be viewed as below the status of professionals. In addition, remuneration given to interpreters typically is less than what professionals receive. Occasionally, interpreters work voluntarily.



Professionals should attempt to learn from the interpreter the courtesies and body language which are important for communicating with the families.

Some professionals may regard interpreters as vehicles but not as partners (Egli, 1987). Plata (1993) presented four perceptions

possessed by interpreters: "(a) covering up their monolingual colleagues' inadequacies; (b) working for highly paid professionals, sometimes without remuneration; (c) doing voluntary work, sometimes without remuneration, in addition to their regular work routine; and (d) working in areas in which they possess inadequate knowledge" (p. 22). The disparity in positions and knowledge may over time engender resentment or hostility in interpreters if left unaddressed. Professionals need to

discuss duties and acknowledge the vital roles of interpreters on an ongoing basis. To maintain the partnership role, professionals should acknowledge and respect interpreters' competence as cultural brokers (Egli, 1987; Fradd, 1990; Langdon, 1994). Interpreters may have more cultural as well as language competence than professionals. For example, professionals may ask the following questions when they want to start toilet training for a child: "Could you tell me how parents in your country may feel about starting toilet training for 2-year-old children?" Additionally, interpreters should be encouraged to inform professionals of culturally appropriate behaviors (e.g., how to greet the family, how closely they can sit to the family). Professionals should attempt to learn from the interpreter the courtesies and body language which are important for communicating with the families, and practice what they learn in future meetings.

It should be noted, however, that professionals may unintentionally make a stronger bonding with interpreters than families because of the common language and the frequent communication. Occasionally, professionals do not make eye-contact even when asking parents direct questions. Although non-English-speaking parents may not understand what professionals say, the tone of speech and facial expression with the eye-contact made by the professionals may facilitate



**TABLE 1: MINIMAL SKILLS INTERPRETERS
NEED FOR A SUCCESSFUL ... PROCESS**

building emotional bonding between families and professionals. Professionals need to be aware of this point.

A summary of minimal skills interpreters need for a successful interpretation process is outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1*Minimal Skills Interpreters Need for a Successful Interpretation Process*

- ▶ Does the interpreter have knowledge of both English and the language or languages that the family uses?
- ▶ Does the interpreter have the skills to translate one language to another?
- ▶ Does the interpreter have knowledge of the culture, values, and traditions of both parties?
- ▶ Does the interpreter have knowledge of terms and concepts in special education?
- ▶ Does the interpreter have knowledge of roles of individuals in the special education process (e.g., IFSP meeting)?
- ▶ Does the interpreter have good interpersonal skills?



DETERMINING WHEN INTERPRETERS ARE NOT NEEDED

Determining When Interpreters are not Needed

Consideration should also be given to times when interpreters may not be needed (see Table 3). For example, some families with limited English proficiency are able to convey factual

information (e.g., what kind of snack the mother feeds her child) to the professionals in English. A decision to use interpreters may require a

cost-benefit analysis and depend on the kind of information being conveyed and exchanged. The same family that can convey factual information about daily routines may not necessarily be able to express in depth their beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about disability and intervention (Egli, 1987).

If families communicate with professionals to some extent in English, but are not skillful in expressing their thoughts and in receiving information in English, their energy is spent exclusively on translating their native language into English or vice-versa. The heavy demands of decoding and encoding may lead the families to convey just words translated into English without any emotional attachment (e.g., monotone, robotic speech) that would be conveyed in their native language.

In addition to this "emotional detachment," "intellectual detachment" might be experienced by the families with limited English proficiency. Often such families may select a simple expression that does not reflect their beliefs, values, feelings, and thoughts when they are under pressure to say something in English to answer the question.

For example, limited-English-proficient parents may want to explain how they deal with their child who often screams when given a disliked food by the parent. The parent may deal with the behavior exhibited by the child, depending on the degree of scream, the persons who sit together during a meal, the feelings of parents, and how the child behaves in other daily routines. However, because of the limited English proficiency the parents may generalize what they do (e.g., "I just say 'Stop it!' when my son screams") instead of explaining every reaction pattern for each case (e.g., "When he screams loudly, I say, 'Stop it.' But, when he screams but the volume is not so loud, I say, 'This is very good for your health,' and model him showing how delicious it is."). Emotional and intellectual detachment, however, could be reduced if families who have limited English proficiency are allowed to use their first language (i.e., use interpreters). The first language performance also provides professionals opportunities to observe natural verbal and non-verbal behaviors

 Emotional and intellectual detachment could be reduced if families who have limited English proficiency are allowed to use their first language (i.e., use interpreters).

TABLE 2: CONSIDERATIONS WHEN INTERPRETERS ARE NOT NEEDED

of the families, which enhances professionals' awareness of different cultural styles (Egli, 1987; Media, 1982). Table

2 suggests some considerations when it appears interpreters are not needed.

TABLE 2

Considerations When Interpreters are Not Needed

- ▶ Implement best practices for limited-English-proficient families (e.g., speak slowly and clearly and provide written information).
- ▶ Determine if the families are experiencing any type of "emotional" or "intellectual" detachment.
- ▶ Encourage the family to contact several interpreters and to choose the best one if the family wants to have interpretation services.

In determining whether interpreters are needed, professionals should assess whether implementation of best practices with limited-English-proficient families (e.g., speaking slowly and clearly, providing sufficient time for the family to express their thoughts and feelings, providing the family written information about topics to be discussed) is effective. If these are not effective in reducing emotional and

intellectual detachment of the family or in minimizing discomfort experienced by the family, then the use of interpreters should be an option. Needless to say, before the final decision, professionals must discuss the effective costs of interpretation (e.g., lack of interpreter neutrality, less self-disclosure by families, stronger bonding of professionals with interpreters rather than families).



TABLE 3: RECOMMENDED PRACTICES**TABLE 3**

*Recommended Practices for Professionals
Who Work with Interpreters in Meetings*

► BEFORE THE MEETINGRECOMMENDED
PRACTICE

- Have a list of interpreters.
- Encourage the family to choose an interpreter who is the most satisfactory to the family.
- Discuss the importance of neutrality.
- Encourage the interpreter to be self-reflective.
- Discuss with interpreters how clear communication could be promoted. Do not discuss attitudes of families toward the plan proposed by the team.
- Provide the interpreter with written documents as advance organizers. Discuss the agenda of the meeting on the basis of the documents.
- Provide the interpreter a glossary that plainly explains terms used in special education.
- Encourage the interpreter to take an introductory course in special education at college level.
- Discuss the duties and vital roles of interpreters and other team members.
- Encourage the interpreter to be a cultural broker.

► DURING THE MEETINGRECOMMENDED
PRACTICE

- Create an informal atmosphere.
- Avoid using professional jargon.
- Use visual aids and concrete examples.
- Avoid idiomatic words, slang, and metaphors that are difficult to translate.
- Be aware of loan words.
- Use simple sentences.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Use consecutive interpretation.
- Encourage the interpreter to take notes and ask questions whenever he/she needs.
- Be sensitive to reactions shown by the interpreter to identify if interpretation process is going well. However, your eye contact should be mainly with the family.

► AFTER THE MEETINGRECOMMENDED
PRACTICE

- Evaluate the meeting with the interpreter using the guidelines described in "Before the Meeting" and "During the Meeting."
- Encourage the interpreter to ask questions and clarify issues about the meeting.
- Identify problems that the interpreter may have encountered during the meeting.
- Encourage the interpreter to advise you if you communicate with the family in a culturally inappropriate manner.
- Brainstorm ways to address those problems for future meetings.



Summary

This report reviewed existing literature on the use of interpreters in educational settings and discussed five themes that should be considered when professionals work with interpreters who are not trained either for professional interpreting or special education: (a) the complexity of the interpretation process, (b) enhancing accurate interpretation, (c) interpreter styles, (d) the psychosocial aspects of the interpretation process, and (e) determining when interpreters are not needed.

Interpretation is very complex and demanding. Yet, often the role and information needs of the interpreter have been neglected. Untrained interpreters have been drafted for monolingual staff and afforded low status. In this context, interpreters are prone to misinterpret, may not maintain a neutral role, and may not develop a partnership with the professionals. These factors might threaten successful communication between professionals and families. By being aware of the information the providers convey and being sensitive to the reactions shown by interpreters and to the psychosocial aspects of the interpretation process, professionals could minimize these negative effects. Table 3 summarizes recommended

practices for a successful interpretation process before, during, and after team meetings.

These recommended practices, emerging from the review on the use of interpreters, overlap with the recommended practices in IFSP and IEP meetings in which a family-centered and a culturally sensitive approach are priorities. For example, a family-centered approach also calls for using jargon-free terms, giving advance organization, *s p e a k i n g* slowly and clearly, and trusting and respecting. However, due to introducing a third party, it should be noted that psychosocial aspects which exist among professionals, families, and interpreters are specific to the interpretation process (e.g., neutrality of interpreters). Finally, the use of interpreters should not be considered a permanent solution. This approach is temporary (Plata, 1993) and should give way to training and hiring bilingual staff whenever possible.



The use of interpreters should not be considered a permanent solution. This approach is temporary and should give way to training and hiring bilingual staff whenever possible.

References

Bibliographies

Resources



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Bibliographies

Resources



Annotated Bibliographies



Langdon, H. W. (1994). The Interpreter Translator Process in the Educational Setting: A Resource Manual. (rev.) [ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED383155]

Summary

In this manual, the authors describe the qualifications, background, roles, and common errors of interpreters and translators. In addition, the authors propose roles of educational team members to facilitate the process of interpretation and translation. The authors define interpretation and translation as the process of changing the primary language to the second language or vice versa. The interpretation process occurs through the oral modality, whereas translation takes place through the written modality. The authors also discuss two main procedures used in the interpretation process: simultaneous interpretation and consecutive interpretation. In consecutive interpretation, the interpreter translates a segment of the message conveyed by the speaker following a short pause. In simultaneous interpretation, the interpreter begins to translate the message as soon as the speaker conveys the message. In the education field, the authors recommend that interpreters use the consecutive method.

The authors mention seven points in the qualification of interpreters. The authors also agree that people who have an educational background or professionals, such as nurses, doctors, and community workers, are good prospective interpreters. They do not regard relatives, siblings, or friends of the family as desirable interpreters or translators.

This manual also addresses the role of the interpreter in education meetings that facilitate the interpretation and thus communication process. These roles include: addressing comments directly to parents; interpreting clearly and precisely; asking for clarification, if needed; maintaining a neutral attitude; taking notes; using dictionaries as needed; and creating a comfortable environment. Roles of education team members that facilitate this process include: keeping grammatical construction as simple as possible; avoiding unnecessary words, idiomatic words or expressions, and professional jargon; and watching for indications that the interpreter is having difficulty.

The authors also recommend that the education team member attend to the following aspects of the interpreter to be sure the process is appropriate: (a) body language, (b) clues that indicate confusion or uncertainty, (c) obvious use of excessive words in proportion to what was said, and (d) interpreted response from the parent that does not coincide with what was said.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Egli, E. (1987). The role of bilingual social workers without professional mental health training in mental health services for refugees. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED308436

Summary

This author discusses the issues facing bilingual workers in the field of mental health for refugees. The issue includes difficulty in finding trained, highly skilled bilingual workers; the lack of knowledge about how to work through and with non-professionally trained bilingual workers; the burn-out of bilingual workers by overwhelming demands; and connotations and subtle implications existing in mental health, which require interpreters to have higher skills.

The authors enumerated characteristics of the interpretation process: (a) the process is extremely demanding; (b) the interpreter is not a vehicle but a partner; (c) the interpreter needs to understand special meanings attached to key words, actions, and gestures; (d) the interpreter needs to be familiar with both cultures and languages; (e) the interpreter needs to elaborate when a verbatim interpretation is technically correct but may miss a crucial point.

The author recommends that even when the patient is capable of communicating in English, an interpreter should be used. One reason is that the patient may be able to express factual information in English, but not affective or personal information. Also, when a patient uses her or his second language, emotional detachment tends to occur.

References

Bibliographies

Resources



Resources

RESOURCES | VIDEOS

Conversations for Three: Communicating Through Interpreters**[Video and Booklet]**

Deborah Chen
Sam Chan
Linda Brekken

Summary

This 60-minute videotape recording and discussion guide is designed for training service providers who depend on interpreters to communicate with the families with whom they work. The video teaches service providers and interpreters how to communicate effectively with families, regardless of their cultural or linguistic backgrounds. Three different sections address understanding differences in communication, working effectively with interpreters, and ensuring accurate communication. The videotape shows service providers how to respond sensitively to cultural and linguistic differences. The discussion guide provides objectives, key terms, facilitator notes, discussion questions, learning activities, and handouts to help the facilitator plan lessons and guide the group.

Bibliographic Information

Deborah Chen, Sam Chan, Linda Brekken. *Conversations for Three: Communicating Through Interpreters* [Video and Booklet] (2000). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.: Baltimore, MD. (36 pages). Language: English

Availability

May be ordered from:

Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. • P.O. Box 10624 • Baltimore, MD 21285 •
(800) 638-3775 phone • (410) 337-8539 fax • custserv@brookespublishing.com e-mail •
<http://www.brookespublishing.com/> web

Producer Information

Intended User Audience: This material is intended for administrators, pre-service students, faculty/trainers, service delivery personnel and paraprofessionals in the early childhood special education/early intervention fields. The material would be useful for anyone working with interpreters and families of children with disabilities who are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Producer Information (cont.)

Product Development: Conversations for Three is designed to train service providers and interpreters in working more effectively with families who do not speak English. The developers were administrators, parents, faculty, service delivery personnel and paraprofessionals from the fields of early intervention/early childhood special education, psychology, deafness, visual impairments, nursing, social work, speech pathology, and family therapy. The developers were Euro-American, Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Jewish, and Deaf adults.

Product Evaluation: The material was evaluated in 1998-99 by the following groups: (1) family/professional teams in California who used the video in training; (2) a focus group of faculty/administrators who work in special education; and (3) by two experts in training interpreters in school districts. The evaluators represented the fields of early intervention/early childhood special education, early childhood education, family therapy, speech pathology, psychology, and nursing. Individuals of Hispanic American, African American, European American, and Asian American backgrounds were involved in the evaluation efforts. The data from the evaluation is included in the Project CRAFT final report published in 1999.

Product Dissemination: Not known; the material was just published in 2000.

The Family-Centered Infant-Toddler Program: A Guide for Interpreters

[Video and Guide]

Karen Holbert

Summary

This guide and video provides information for North Carolina interpreters working with early intervention programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities. After providing an outline of the video and suggestions for study, the guide addresses guidelines for interpreter roles and responsibilities, and guidelines for family-centered interpreting. The need for respecting family autonomy, family uniqueness, and family strengths is emphasized. The material then describes the components of the North Carolina Infant-Toddler Program, including referral to the program, program services, the Individualized Family Service Plan, and procedural safeguards. A dictionary of terms that doctors and early interventionists might use with families and a dictionary of early intervention words are provided in English and in Spanish.

Bibliographic Information

Karen Holbert. *The Family-Centered Infant-Toddler Program: A Guide for Interpreters [Video and Guide]* (1996). North Carolina Infant Toddler Program: Raleigh, NC. (47 pages). Languages: Spanish and English

Availability

May be ordered from:

North Carolina Infant Toddler Program • Department of Health and Human Services,
Division of Early Intervention and Education • 1020 Richardson Drive, Royster
Building • 2302 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, NC 27699 • (919) 715-7500 phone •
(919) 733-3075 fax • duncan.munn@ncmail.net e-mail

Producer Information

Intended User Audience: This material was written for both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking early intervention professionals (e.g., administrators, service delivery personnel, paraprofessionals) and professionals from other disciplines (e.g., psychology, speech pathology). It can also be used with a wide range of audiences, such as pre-service students, parent and family members, faculty trainers, and interpreters who are involved in early intervention services. Although the material was developed in North Carolina, it can be used across the U.S.

Producer Information (cont.)

Product Development: The material and the video were developed with the assistance of the Cultural Diversity Committee in North Carolina. Many professionals from European American, Hispanic, African, and Hmong cultures participated in the development of the material. The first part of material was written in English, and can be applied to any language. The second part (e.g., the glossary of terminology) is translated in Spanish. The video in English can be helpful to professionals working in early intervention agencies in the U.S.

Product Evaluation: There was no formal evaluation with the material. However, it was reviewed by the Cultural Diversity Committee in North Carolina.

Product Dissemination: Approximately 150 copies have been distributed to all the early intervention programs in North Carolina.

Something Got Lost in the Translation: The Role of the Interpreter/Translator in Early Intervention

[Video and Accompanying Handouts]

Susanne Marcus

Summary

This kit is intended to assist early intervention personnel in preparing interpreters to work with them to evaluate the needs of at-risk children and children who are developmentally delayed. The video is used to illustrate appropriate behavior, how the interpreters are to convey meaning between the evaluators and parents, and what the interpreters should expect during the evaluation sessions. There are three parts to the interview: (1) Briefing—the evaluator explains the logistics of the meeting to the interpreter, including the introduction of participants, the seating arrangement, the purpose of the interaction, and the terminology to be used and a reminder to translate everything spoken. (2) Interaction—it will be noisy and distracting. The interpreter should have strong memory skills and be able to handle unplanned events. (3) Debriefing—the interpreter explains things that might not have been said, such as the family's concerns that the child might "act up," or any cultural influences that might have affected the interview.

Bibliographic Information

Susanne Marcus. *Something Got Lost in the Translation: The Role of the Interpreter/Translator in Early Intervention [Video and Accompanying Handouts]* (1996). Early Intervention Training Consortium [New York State]: New York, NY. Language: English

Availability

May be ordered from:

Early Intervention Training Consortium [New York State] • Interagency Council of MRDD Agencies, Inc. • 275 Seventh Avenue • New York, NY 10001 • (212) 645-6360 phone • (212) 627-8847 fax • mames@iacny.org e-mail

Additional e-mail address to contact regarding this material: smarcussol@cs.com

Producer Information

Intended User Audience: This material is intended for parents/family members, administrators, early childhood and early intervention/early childhood special education personnel, occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech pathologists, translators and interpreters.

Product Development: Participants in the development of the video include: parents, service delivery personnel, faculty/trainers, early intervention/early childhood special education personnel, paraprofessionals, and speech pathologists. These participants were from the following cultural and linguistic groups: Central American, South American, Russian, European American, and Native American.

Product Evaluation: Though no formal evaluation has been published, the video has been evaluated by participants (in New York City and Albany, New York), including: Service delivery personnel, administrators, faculty/trainers, early intervention/early childhood special education personnel, and speech pathologists. These people were from the following cultural and linguistic groups: 35% European American; 15% African American; 25% South American; 10% Mandarin Chinese; 15% Puerto Rican.

Product Dissemination: Approximately 125 copies have been distributed in New York State.

Developing Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Assessment

Susan M. Moore
Janet Beatty

Summary

This document serves as a supplement to the Screening and Evaluation Process Guidelines developed in 1993 by the Child Find Project. The supplement provides specific recommendations on gathering background information, working with interpreters and cultural mediators, interpreting assessment information, sharing this information with families, adapting formal measures and utilizing informal measures. Tips for teams address second language acquisition and bilingualism, ethnographic interviewing, facilitating family-directed involvement in the assessment process, and other steps in a truly non-biased assessment process. A self-reflection tool is provided for practitioners to use in assessing their own cultural competence, as is a review of the literature and current practices. Available assessment tools and instruments are listed with extensive annotations. Appendices include a brief overview of the process of developing locally-normed assessment instruments and a discussion of special assessment considerations for second-language learners.

Bibliographic Information

Susan M. Moore, Janet Beatty. *Developing Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Assessment* (1995). Dr. Susan Moore: Boulder, CO. (79 pages). Language: English

Availability

May be ordered from:

Dr. Susan Moore • CB409 • SLHS • University of Colorado at Boulder •
Boulder, CO 80309 • (303) 492-6445 phone

Producer Information

Intended User Audience: This manual is primarily intended for early childhood assessment team members, especially bilingual staff. Disciplines include early childhood special education/early intervention and speech pathology; it would be useful across other fields in which assessment of children from diverse backgrounds is required. Others who have requested this material include administrators and faculty. Additionally, the manual has been used in training pre-service students. Users of this manual may be at an introductory level of experience with early childhood assessment. The manual was intended for use with children with Hispanic backgrounds (Spanish speaking), but examples relevant for Asian and Native American communities are also included.

Producer Information (cont.)

Product Development: A design group composed of Spanish-speaking parents, bilingual assessment team members, college faculty (including speech hearing science faculty, psychology), and cultural mediators developed the manual. The developers of the material had Hispanic, European, Asian American, and Native American backgrounds.

Product Evaluation: The material has not been formally field tested; however, a team of five professionals in the field reviewed the materials, and this input was taken into account for the final draft. The reviewers represented a variety of cultural backgrounds including African American and Hispanic. One reviewer had extensive experience working with Native Americans.

Product Dissemination: Approximately 500 copies of Developing Cultural Competence in Early Childhood Assessment have been disseminated, primarily in Colorado.



Serving Families of Diverse Cultures

Lori Rowan
Rosemary Vander Meyden
Connie Pehrson

Summary

This monograph is designed for service providers who are providing early intervention services to families of diverse cultures. It contains ideas and suggestions for cultivating cultural awareness and sensitivity. The monograph is divided into five sections.

Section 1, "Personal Stories from Service Providers: A Bouquet of Experiences," contains stories from providers who have worked with and interacted with families of diverse cultures.

Section 2, "Bridging the Cultural/Diversity Gap Between the Family and the Service Provider: Using the Diversity Wheel," describes the Diversity Wheel and how it can be used to improve cultural sensitivity and diversity awareness.

Section 3, "Respecting Cultural Diversity When Gathering Information," describes six principles to assist providers in respectfully gathering information from families of diverse cultures.

Section 4, "Reflecting Culturally Responsive Practices During the Assessment Process," provides practical strategies that support best practices in assessing young children with disabilities of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Section 5, "Considerations in Providing Sensitive and Appropriate Programming for Linguistically Diverse Families," contains information in a number of areas including the following: the language used by the service provider, use of bilingual service providers, translating written materials, curriculum strategies, introducing mainstreamed practices, and involving family members in home visit interactions. The monograph contains 36 references in total.

Bibliographic Information

Lori Rowan, Rosemary Vander Meyden, Connie Pehrson. *Serving Families of Diverse Cultures* (1999). HOPE Infant Family Support Program: North Logan, UT. (126 pages). Language: English

Availability

May be ordered from:

HOPE Infant Family Support Program • 1856 N. 1200 E. • North Logan, UT 84341 •
(435) 245-2888 *phone* • hpe@hopepubl.com *e-mail* • <http://www.hopepubl.com/> *web*

Producer Information

Intended User Audience: The intended user audience is all professionals in the early intervention field—from all disciplines and all levels of experience.

Product Development: The three editors of the book are research instructors at Utah State University at the SKI HI Institute, a division of the Department of Communicative Disorders. They wrote the book in collaboration with authors and researchers in the fields of early intervention and cultural diversity. Developers were Hispanic, European American, African American and Native American.

Product Evaluation: The book has not been field tested or evaluated.

Product Dissemination: Several hundred copies have been distributed throughout the U.S.A.

A

**About
C·L·A·S**



About the CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute

Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The Council for Exceptional Children

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education

Overview

The Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) is a federally-funded collaborative effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, The Council for Exceptional Children, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. The CLAS Institute is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the U.S. Department of Education.

C · L · A · S

Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services
Early Childhood Research Institute

The CLAS Institute identifies, evaluates, and promotes effective and appropriate early intervention practices and preschool practices that are sensitive and respectful to children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. CLAS has several basic assumptions which define and guide its work. CLAS' goals are outlined below, as well as some of the issues and concerns important to our work. Finally, a brief overview is included about the outcomes we anticipate accomplishing by the end of this project.

Assumptions

We adhere to the following fundamental beliefs in our research, training and dissemination activities:

Assumptions About Culture and Language:

1. Individuals and families are members of multiple cultures.
2. Cultures are multi-faceted and dynamic.
3. Multilingualism is an asset.
4. A solid foundation in one's primary language contributes to acquisition of a second language.
5. Cultural competence is a process entailing lifelong learning.

ABOUT THE CLAS INSTITUTE

6. Many people have not had an equal voice, equal representation or equal access to health and education services. We recognize that institutional racism continues and will address issues of access and equity in the search, review, and dissemination of materials.
7. Beliefs and attitudes about culture and language shape outcomes; positive beliefs contribute to inclusiveness; negative beliefs undermine it.

Assumptions About the Work of the Institute:

1. Culturally and linguistically diverse practitioners and families will be involved in the work of the Institute as advisors, reviewers, and evaluators.
2. Materials will reflect the intersection of culture and language, disabilities and child development.
3. A range of strategies or approaches will be identified from which practitioners, families, and researchers can make an informed selection of practices or materials. In our dissemination of reviewed materials, we will not advise or prescribe solutions but will facilitate better questions regarding material selection.
4. Products will be "user amorous" and our evaluation will in part focus on the usability and impact of these products.

The work of the Institute is complex, challenging, and developmental in nature.

Goals

The CLAS Institute identifies, collects, reviews, catalogs, abstracts, and describes materials and practices developed for children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and professionals who work with them. In the latter years of this five-year Institute, CLAS will identify gaps in existing materials and practices, prepare translations of a limited number of materials, and pilot-test a limited number of promising materials to ensure that effective early intervention practices are available to families and service providers who work with them. CLAS will:

1. Create a resource bank and catalog of validated culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, and of documented effective strategies, for early intervention and preschool services.
2. Conduct a review of materials by experts in the fields of early childhood education, early intervention/early childhood special education, and in multicultural education, considering issues not only of effectiveness but also of social, cultural, and linguistic acceptability to children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
3. Evaluate and validate selected materials through field testing of the materials with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
4. Disseminate reviewed materials and practices that meet the dual criteria of (1) effectiveness and (2) cultural and linguistic appropriateness for all relevant stakeholders.

About the Authors

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3-1-1, Tushima-naka • Okayama 700-8530 • Japan

Yoshi is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Okayama. He is in charge of several courses related to curriculum and instruction of special education in Japan. In 1997-1998 he was a graduate research assistant for the CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute. Yoshi has written on quality of life for individuals with mental retardation, independent living, and self-disclosure in supported employment settings by non-disabled co-workers. His current research interests include social integration between individuals with and without disabilities and communication strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Susan A. Fowler, Ph.D.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • 1310 South Sixth Street • Champaign, IL 61820

Susan is the Principal Investigator of the CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute, Professor and Dean of the College of Education, University of Illinois. Her current research interests include transition between services for families of infants and young children with disabilities, and issues of culturally and linguistically appropriate services in early childhood. Susan has been President of the Division for Early Childhood, Council for Exceptional Children; and President of the Higher Education Consortium of Special Education. She is co-author of several articles on cultural and linguistic diversity in early childhood special education.

Rosa Milagros (Amy) Santos, Ph.D.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign • 51 Gerdy Drive • 61 Children's Research Center • Champaign, IL 61820

Amy is an assistant professor at the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois, Project Coordinator of the CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute and Co-Principal Investigator (with Dr. Jeanette McCollum) of a grant studying Filipino mothers' perceptions of appropriate parent-child interactions. For several years she worked as a preschool teacher and as a special education teacher in the Philippines. Amy's research interests include issues that relate to the impact of culture, race and language in the delivery of services to young children with disabilities (birth to five years old) and their families. Her research focuses on family support services, parent-child interactions across cultures, and development of intercultural competence of early childhood service providers. Amy has a long-term interest in developing strategies for instruction in the natural environment, applying behavioral momentum principles to enhance communication development, and using technology in personnel preparation. Amy is an active member of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children serving in various leadership roles for the Illinois subdivision and national DEC. She was recently involved with DEC's efforts to revise its Recommended Practices. She is Chair of the Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strand. Amy is also the chair for DEC's Multicultural Activities Committee.

For more information on the CLAS Early Childhood Research Institute ...

**Contact Amy Santos or Rob Corso (Project
Coordinators) or Ron Banks (Information Specialist):**

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clas@ericps.crc.uiuc.edu *e-mail*

CLAS Technical Report Topics:

Child Assessment

Child Find

Cross-Cultural Considerations

- CLAS Mission
- Cross-Cultural Communication
- Cross-Cultural Conceptions of Child-Rearing
- Cultural Definitions and Issues
- View of Disability

Deaf Parents and Their Hearing Children

Family Information Gathering

Family Support Services

Helping Relationships and Service Utilization

Motor Skills Interventions

Parent-Infant Interaction

Personnel Preparation

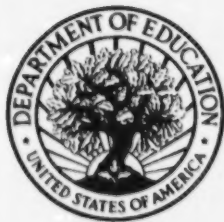
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Transition

Visual Impairment

Working with Interpreters



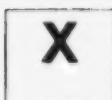


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